

THE
ALABAMA BAPTIST
CONVENTION
1823-1842

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J. H.

MINUTES

OF THE

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1834.

The Baptist State Convention of Alabama, convened according to appointment, with the church, at Salem meeting-house, near Greensborough. Introductory Sermon delivered by Brother A. G. M'Craw, from Rom. 10th, 17th, "So then, faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God," and the Convention opened by prayer from Brother Robert Marsh.

The President, Hosea Holcombe, was called to the Chair, and A. J. Holcombe appointed Suetetary, pro tem.

DELEGATES.

From Canaan Association—Hosea Holcombe,
Thomas W. Armstrong,
Henry Cox,
W. J. Holcombe, and
O. H. Peterson.

Tuscaloosa County Society—Robert Marsh,
Thomas W. Cox,
George W. Baines, and
Robert S. Foster.

Perry County Society—E. D. King,
A. W. Jackson.

Annual Subscribers, who appeared and took their seats in the Convention, were Brethren

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|---------------------|-------------------|
| Thomas Chiles, Sen. | W. H. Lawrence, |
| John W. Wilson, | John May, |
| Daniel P. Bester, | Jeremiah Sanders, |
| Joel Lipscomb, | Mathies Dennis, |
| Wiley J. Croom, | George Hopper, |
| R. S. Foster, | Charles Crow, |
| J. L. Goree, | W. Ford, |
| Jesse H. Croom, | A. J. Holcombe, |
| J. W. Baines, | A. G. M'Craw, |

John Dennis,
 W. B. P. Gaines,
 Greene Huckaby,
 Levin B. Lain,
 Edmond Prince,
 James H. Devotee,
 David Buck,
 W. T. Hendon,
 Asa Wright,
 A. B. M^cWhorter,

James R. Haggard,
 Harris Tinker,
 W. J. Cole,
 Alfred Calaway,
 Jesse Shivers,
 Alva Woods,
 A. C. Horton,
 S. D. Worthington,
 G. W. Brane.

The Convention then proceeded to the election of officers; whereupon, Hosca Holcombe was duly re-elected President; Charles Crow, and Joseph Ryan, Vice-Presidents; John W. Wilson, Recording Secretary; Daniel P. Bestor, Corresponding Secretary, and A. G. M^cCraw, Treasurer.

The following committees were appointed, to wit:

A Committee to arrange the Preaching during the meeting—Brethren Sanders, Foster, Horton, Chiles, Croom, Huckaby and Prince.

On Domestic Missions—Brethren the President, M^cCraw and Bestor.

Foreign Missions—Brethren Bestor, Wilson and Tinker.

On the Agency—Brethren Crow, Bestor, Marsh, J. H. Croom, Gorce, Sanders and Horton.

On Nomination—Brethren Alva J. Holcombe, Ford, Dennis and Jackson.

On Arranging the Business of the Convention—The President, Recording Secretary, J. Ford, Crow, Tinker, Gorce and Ford.

A Committee to act in conjunction with the Committee appointed by the Trustees—Brethren M^cCraw, Bestor, Lain, Prince, Sanders and Crow.

A Committee to new-model the Constitution—Brethren Bestor, Horton and M^cCraw.

The Committee appointed to arrange the preaching during the meeting, made the following report, for preaching on the Sabbath, to wit: Brethren Devotee and Bestor, to preach the Missionary Sermon, Worthington and Marsh to conclude, &c.

The Convention then adjourned till Monday morning, 9 o'clock.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10.

Met pursuant to adjournment.

Prayer, from the President.

The several Committees made their reports as follows, to wit: the committee on Location, that was appointed by the Board of Trustees at their meeting in Tuscaloosa; that they had purchased a farm one mile east of Greensborough, containing 355 acres, for which they agreed to pay six thousand three hundred and ninety dollars.

A Committee, consisting of Bretiren May, Sanders and Tinker, then reported that they had conferred with Brother Hutchens, from whom the Committee on Location had purchased the aforesaid farm, and received for answer, that possession could be obtained by the fifteenth of February, provided the first payment was made by the first of said month.

The Committee on Nomination reported the persons they nominated, who will compose the Board of Directors, together with the officers elected at this meeting.

The Committee that was appointed to act in conjunction with the Committee on Location, by Brother Bestor, their chairman, made the following report, to wit:

“That the school should consist of a literary and theological department, and that both should go into operation as soon as practicable. To this end, it is required that some buildings should be erected for the accommodation of students. Your committee suggest, considering the state of the school fund, the propriety of erecting some temporary buildings until time and means enable the convention to erect permanent ones.

It is believed by your committee, that the Principal of the school should be the Professor of Theology, and that no person should be selected until one eminently qualified can be procured. It is also believed that a Theological class can be made up so soon as that department can possibly be ready to go into operation.

Your committee believe it to be of much importance that the Literary department should go into operation early in the coming year: they therefore suggest to the convention, the propriety of selecting teachers who will be prepared to teach, so soon as buildings can be erected for the reception of students. In the selection of such teachers your committee believe it to be of much importance that one should be procured, who has had some experience in teaching at a manual labor institution for the obvious reason of avoiding the mistakes necessarily connected with inexperience, and for the purpose of putting the manual labour plan into immediate and successful operation.

It is believed by your committee that a Professor of Lan-

guages and a Professor of Mathematics could find immediate employment, and that if the students become too numerous for these professors to attend to English literature, then one should be selected exclusively for that purpose. Your committee consider it of much importance that a suitable superintendant be procured to manage the Farm, and to board the Students, and that such person, if possible, be one who is acquainted with the business. In conclusion, your committee congratulate the convention upon the favorable opinion entertained by this community, of the prospects of this institution, believing that such opinion is eminently calculated to give success and patronage to the school. All which is respectfully submitted.

The above report was then received and adopted.

Resolved, This body shall be composed of members of the Baptist church only, to wit: Such as are delegated by the auxiliary societies, together with all other members of our church, who shall authorise their names to be recorded, and shall be an annual subscriber to any of the particular objects of this convention.

The Committee on the Agency made the following report, which was read and adopted, to wit:

Your committee, to whom was referred the subject of the Agency of this Convention, submit the following report:

Your committee are not in possession of the knowledge of what has been done by agents hitherto engaged for this convention. Believing, however, that such knowledge will be laid before this body, your committee deem it unnecessary to call the attention of the convention to that subject.

As the school funds are now expended in the purchase of a suitable plantation for the operations of the institution, your committee consider it indispensable for its future prosperity that suitable persons be in the constant employment of the convention in procuring funds for the school, and, in disseminating correct information relative to the institution and the convention.

Such persons, your committee think, should be well informed, and acceptable preachers, who cannot be discouraged, who gain strength from opposition, and who feeling that the great cause of their Divine Master is connected with their efforts, are zealous in the work, industrious in their business, and believe they shall finally triumph.

Your committee suggest the propriety of calling upon all preachers connected with this convention, to engage to act as

agents, during a certain number of weeks, and that they report their proceedings and success at the next annual meeting. All of which is respectfully submitted.

Brother Hosea Holcombe, the riding agent of this convention made the following report, to wit: That he had in the course of the ensuing year spent 140 days, and travelled 1700 miles, preached 85 sermons, delivered 48 addresses, obtained subscriptions for the Manual Labor Institution to the amount of \$1529 31 $\frac{1}{4}$; collected of the same, with J. M. Scolls, \$57 12 $\frac{1}{2}$; collected for Foreign Missions, \$31 62 $\frac{1}{2}$; for Domestic Missions, \$65 25.

Resolved, That the amount of \$65 25, collected by Brother Holcombe for Domestic Missions, be retained by him.

Whereas it appeared that Brother A. G. M^cCraw had rendered important services to the convention, for which he made no charge, be it resolved, that the thanks of this body be tendered him for his disinterested devotion to the cause of the convention.

Resolved, That the committee appointed by the trustees, be authorised to lay out a plan for the campus of the institution, and that this committee commence erecting one story frame buildings, with two rooms, for dormitories, and that they continue to erect as necessity and means increase. Resolved, That Brother Bestor be requested to deliver lectures on Theology until a permanent Professor be procured.

Brother Hosea Holcombe and S. D. Worthington were appointed riding agents of the convention for one year.

Resolved, That the expenses of the agents be defrayed by the money in their hands, and an account kept and report made to the next meeting of this body.

Ministering Brethren, by request of the convention, came forward and volunteered their services to act as agents for the same, to wit: A. G. M^cCraw, D. P. Bestor, Robert Marsh, James H. Devotee, and John W. Wilson.

Resolved, That Brethren A. S. Bailey and Platt Stoughton be requested to act as the agents of this convention in the city of Mobile and other places.

Report of the Corresponding Secretary, to wit:

Brother President—In compliance with a resolution adopted at the last anniversary of the Baptist State Convention, I beg leave to submit the following report:

BIBLE SOCIETY.

The American Bible Society was organised in the city of New-York on the 11th of May, in the year 1816. It was the

design of its establishment to concentrate the exertions of the then existing local societies, and by combining the unity of effort with economy of means to promote, more extensively, the circulation of the Holy Scriptures, in distinct anticipation of the future wants of this country, arising from the extent of territory and the increase of population, and the "dreadful consequences which ensue from a people's out-growing the knowledge of eternal life," was the institution founded. Nor was it expected that its beneficial effects would be confined to this country; but that it would endeavor, in connexion with the labors of kindred institutions in other lands, to scatter the word of life into all the destitute regions of the earth.

Such were the views which led to the formation of the American Bible Society; and experience has shown the wisdom of the measures adopted. In fourteen years of its operations, and from comparatively an humble sphere of exertion, it has arisen to take a view of the wants, and resolved to supply all families destitute of the Scriptures, within the limits of the country. To this institution have the hands of multitudes, from every quarter, been extended for the bread of eternal life. With the aid derived from its auxiliaries, it has already put in circulation in several languages, more than one million of Bibles and Testaments.

THE AMERICAN SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

Reports from auxiliaries for the present year are so few and imperfect, that any estimate of the number of schools, teachers and scholars connected with it, would be vague and entirely unsatisfactory. Reports have been received from only 222 of the 1082 auxiliaries. These show an increase of 827 schools, 1954 teachers, and 4,936 scholars, and give a total of 10,019 schools, 88,202 teachers and 590,734 scholars.

The number of societies and schools admitted to the relation of auxiliaries during the past year is 150.

This statement, however, gives but a very partial view of the extent of the system of Sunday School instruction in this country, even so far as numbers are concerned; for besides hundreds of schools which are independent of the Union and of all foreign organization whatever, there are other associations with which a large number of teachers and pupils are connected, and these would probably swell the number in Sunday schools in the United States to nearly one million.

The London Sunday School Union reports in May, 1833, 11,275 schools, 128,784 teachers and 1,158,345 scholars.

A good degree of progress has been made in the establishment

of schools in the Valley of the Mississippi. The number formed within the last year, according to the reports of agents and missionaries, is about five hundred, and the number visited and revived exceeds one thousand.

TEMPERANCE.

In the report presented to the recent annual meeting of the American Temperance Society, the following gratifying facts are stated: More than 200,000 members were added to the temperance societies the past year; more than 7,000 temperance societies formed; present whole number of members in the country, 1,250,000; more than 3,000 distilleries have been stopped; more than 7,000 merchants have ceased to sell ardent spirits; more than 8,000 drunkards have abandoned the use of all that intoxicates; in one place, having a population of 3,000, more than 30 have been reformed: if the same proportion were carried through the United States, 130,000 drunkards would be reformed; more than 1,000 vessels are navigated without ardent spirits.

In Ireland, Scotland, and England, the temperance cause continues to prosper. In Sweden numerous temperance societies have been formed; a periodical is published. The Crown Prince has presided at a temperance society. An able Swiss writer has published a volume of 216 pages, in which he states that in a population of about three millions, they have 180,000 distilleries and consume annually 45,078,470 gallons of distilled liquor, at an expense of 52,177,636 dollars. This quantity, says the writer, passes annually down Swedish throats, of a drink of which the first physicians and physiologists of all countries declare that it contains not a single particle of nutritious substance.

BAPTIST HOME MISSION SOCIETY.

The operations of this society, though of recent origin, and its funds limited, have been very considerable. From a late report of the society, we learn that 83 missionaries and ministers have been employed; that it has aided in 55 years preaching directly, while 145 years more have been supported by other societies in the denominations of kindred character and many of them auxiliary to the society; in the formation of 3 associations and planting of 40 churches, the hopeful conversion of 2000 souls, and the baptism of 1600 persons; besides the establishment of 40 Sunday schools, the distribution of thousands of Bibles and of Tracts, and the general promotion of the cause of Christ and human happiness. While all true Christians will rejoice in

what good has been done, it is obvious that the operations of the society ought to be increased.

THE AMERICAN BAPTIST BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

It appears from the last annual report, that the board has 21 Missionary stations, connected with which are about 90 laborers, either as missionaries or assistants. The number of churches is 14, which include at least 1300 members. The number known to have been baptised the past year, at the different stations, exceeds 200.

During the past year no vacancy has been made in the board by death, and God has mercifully preserved the life of every agent, and, with two exceptions, every missionary in their employment; a fact that calls for our devoutest acknowledgments to the Lord of the harvest, and enforces the duty of such increased devotedness to his service as shall correspond with the magnitude of our daily accumulating obligations.

From the time of Brother Bennett's return from Bengal, in March, 1832, to the close of the year, two presses were kept in operation, and during that period there were printed 3,000 copies of the New Testament, in a volume of 620 pages; 3,000 of the Karen Spelling-book, prepared by Brother Wade; 21,000 of important Tracts in Burmah; 3,000 of a Tract in Taling; 3,000 of the same in Karen; making in the whole 2,388,000 pages. From Jan. 1, 1833, to July 1, four presses were in operation under the direction of Brother Cutter, and there were printed 60,700 copies of different Tracts; 10,000 copies of Brother Boardman's Digest, a work of 204 pages; 10,000 copies of Luke and John, stitched together; making in all 3,840,000 pages. The total number of pages printed from March 15, 1832, to July 1, 1833, were 6,228,000. At the latest dates, the Psalms had been commenced and worked off as far as the 24th, and preparations were making to undertake the entire Old Testament, which is ready for the press.

The receipts for the past year amount to 63,551 dollars, exceeding the receipts of the preceding year by 16,054 dollars; of this sum 7,500 dollars were contributed by the American Bible Society, "to aid in the distribution of the Bible in Burmah," and 4,000 dollars by the American Tract Society. The moral worth of these tokens of enlarged liberality, is beyond all estimate; for while they indicate an interest and a confidence in the operations of the Board, they exhibit that catholic and fraternal disposition to co-operate in every evangelical enterprise, which brightly foretokens the coming of the Messiah's kingdom. We

cannot doubt that institutions conducted as these are, upon the broad principles of Christian benevolence, will continue to enjoy the favor of Heaven, and receive the liberal benefactions of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

ROBT S. FOSTER, *Cors. Sec'y.*

Resolved, That Brother D. P. Bestor be appointed to draft rules of decorum, for the regulation of this convention, and report the same at its next meeting.

Resolved, That the following Brethren be incorporated and requested to act in conjunction with those already appointed as Trustees of the Alabama Institute of Literature and industry, to wit: Abner Blocker and J. L. Towns, of the county of Franklin; W. Leigh, of Lawrence; J. Lane, of Morgan; Alex. Travis, of Conecuh; A. B. McWhorter, and J. Gindrat, of Montgomery; W. R. Harilson and J. Browning, of Lowndes; G. W. Brame, Charles Crow, and E. D. King, of Perry; Samuel Walker, of Madison; Jeremiah Tucker, of Limestone; W. H. Lawrence, D. P. Bestor, and John W. Wilson, of Greene; Jesse H. Croom and Thomas Ringgold, of Marengo; Solomon Perkins, of Wilcox; and Asa Wright, of Sumter.

Resolved, That the Corresponding Secretary keep an account of postage and other expenses, and report the same to the next meeting of this convention.

Resolved, That Brother G. H. Heard be appointed and requested to act as a missionary for this convention in the city of Mobile.

The convention then adjourned until to-morrow, 9 o'clock.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11.

Met pursuant to adjournment. Meeting opened by prayer by Brother Devotee.

Resolved, That the next meeting of the Board of Directors be at Salem meeting-house, near Greensborough, the Saturday before the 2d Sabbath in May next; and that the meeting of said Board be permanent at the aforesaid place.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Brother Hosea Holcombe, *President.*

Joseph Ryan, } *Vice Presidents.*
Charles Crow, }

John W. Wilson, *Secretary.*

Daniel P. Bestor, *Corresponding Secretary.*

A. G. M'Craw, *Treasurer.*

John Dennis,

William Ford,

Jeremiah Sanders,

Jesse H. Croom,

W. H. Hinton,

George Everit,

T. W. Cox, and

William H. Lawrence, }

Directors.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

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|--|-----------|----------------|
| Foreign Missions, | \$152 16½ | |
| Domestic Missions, | 126 02 | |
| Education Fund, | 287 14½ | |
| | <hr/> | |
| | \$565 32¾ | money on hand. |
| Amount of Subscriptions for the Ma- nual Labor Institution, | 7000 00 | |
| | <hr/> | |
| Total, | 7565 32¾ | |

Resolved, That Brother A. C. Horton be appointed to write the next Circular Letter, and make choice of the subject.

Resolved, That Brother Bestor write a short Circular, to be attached to the present Minutes, and 500 additional copies be struck, to be sent to the different churches and associations throughout this State.

Resolved, That Brother Wilson superintend the printing of the Circular and Minutes, with authority to have 1000 copies struck off, and to draw upon the Treasurer for the amount of the expenses incident thereto, and after deducting a proportionable share of the Foreign Mission funds for the purpose above mentioned, the Treasurer is hereby directed to send on the balance to the Treasurer of the General Baptist Convention of the United States.

Appointed Brethren Daniel P. Bestor, Hosea Holcombe, S. D. Worthington, and John W. Wilson, agents for distributing the Minutes.

Resolved, That all money not appropriated by the donor, shall be applied to the Education Fund and Domestic Missions.

Resolved, That eighty dollars of the money collected on Sabbath be applied to the Institution fund, and the remainder to Domestic Missions.

Resolved, That Brethren Bestor, Holcombe and Tinker, be appointed to revise and report a Constitution at the next meeting of this body.

Resolved, That the next meeting of this Convention be held with the Church at Oakmulgee meeting-house, Perry county, on the Saturday before the 2d Sabbath in November next, and Brother James H. Devotee to preach the Introductory Sermon, and Brother D. P. Bestor to preach the Missionary Sermon on Sabbath.

Resolved, That the agents of the convention be instructed to aid in the collection of money subscribed, and pay the same to the Treasurer.

The Sabbath was employed in religious exercises, part of the morning taken up in singing. After which, preaching commenced at the stand in the grove, by the brethren appointed, to wit: Devotee, Bestor and Worthington. The congregation was solemn, and unusually large; and to judge from appearances, and power with which the brethren preached, we would hope much good was done. Oh, that Almighty God may grant the gathering of the fruits many days hence!

Resolved, That the thanks of this Convention be tendered to the inhabitants of Greensborough and its vicinity, for their hospitality to this Convention.

The Convention then adjourned *sine die*.

HOSEA HOLCOMBE, *President*.

JOHN W. WILSON, *Secretary*.

*The Alabama Baptist State Convention, to their Denomination
throughout the State.*

DEAR BRETHREN,—We are now closing our annual meeting, which has been distinguished for unity of feeling, steadiness of purpose, and zeal in promoting the glory of Christ's kingdom. Intelligence is borne from every quarter, of the success of morality, of Foreign and Domestic Missions, and of the cause of our dear Redeemer. Heathens turn from their idols, and now glory in the cross of Christ. Salvation through a Redeemer's blood is successfully proclaimed where the church is not yet planted. We rejoice, that in this great and elevated work, we are permitted to engage, and that the Lord, in giving it success, seals it with the approbation of Heaven.

It has been a favorite object of the convention, to put in operation a Theological and Literary Manual Labor Institution, where our pious youth could be instructed in the way of the Lord more perfectly, and where all could tread the path of science and taste, without the dangers of being drawn aside by the seductions of indolence.

The convention are now gratified in announcing to you, that through the liberality of many, they have been enabled to purchase an eligible situation, for that purpose, in Greene county, combining all the advantages calculated to give success and elevation to the school. The money already subscribed covers the expense of the purchase. It is now requisite that an additional sum be procured for the erection of buildings, the purchase of apparatus, and other needful expenses.

We have appointed our beloved Brethren Hosea Holcombe and S. D. Worthington, as agents of this convention, whom we recommend to your Christian affection and favour. We esteem them faithful and chosen ministers. They will explain to you more fully the motives and objects of our convention.

It is the wise appointment of our God, that some men should be ordained to preach the Word, and administer the Ordinances. Hearing is more successful than reading. When the understanding is enlightened, and the heart is warmed with Divine truth, the countenance, the gesture, and the voice proclaim the Word, and God adds to these means his aid and teaches us that these are the channels, in which his spiritual blessings flow.

That evangelical preachers may be multiplied is one of the high objects of this convention.

We desire to combine the intelligence, the moral and religious strength of our denomination. We know that if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to those who are lost. We know no motive by which we are actuated except a desire to proclaim the mercy of our God, and to promote the salvation of immortal souls. There are many in our State, and more beyond it, to whom the spiritual beauty and glory of the Gospel is not revealed. We believe that the church should seek not only to be fair as the moon, and clear as the sun, but by united effort, should march forward with the strength of a conquering army; that to accomplish this, our schools must be free from bigotry, our pious youth must learn until they are apt to teach, and our people must sustain the ministry, while they bear the banner of our Saviour, stamped with his cross, and stained with his blood.

We do not teach that every herald of the cross must come up to some standard of education. We know, that illiterate men, fraught with grace, proclaim, with success, the merits of Christ. We wish, however, to multiply those who can translate the original Scriptures; those who can enter the field of controversy with the Atheist, and gathering up the scattered rays of ideal excellency, can show that they are the attributes of the Being in whom he lives and moves and exists; those who, ascending the heights of science with the Deist, can waft him off from the sublime of matter to the sublime of mind, enabling him to converse with new scenes of excellency; goodness, and splendour, and teaching him that there is a higher elevation for the immortal spirit, than to be enthroned on the riches of a visible universe. Seeing the excellency of character required and copied out by Revelation, we wish to produce in the minds of others a kindred excellence.

Brethren, we beseech you, by the meekness of Christ, to examine our conduct and motives with impartiality, and to come up to the help of the Lord against the mighty. Let us aid in carrying the news of salvation to the sinful family of Adam. Let us be engaged in diffusing useful knowledge and divine truth. Let us with our hearts and our hands, with unity of purpose and effort, combine our strength in this State, in the high and holy cause of knowledge, of morals, of piety and of eternal blessedness.





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